XIX A Finnish

Irene Spada
of the Heart
forests

FINNISH FAMILY COMES TO AMERICA

Helia, working in a private family as a cook, tells me she has been in America many years, having come over with her family when her father died in Finland.

"I lived in the far north of Finland, on a farm with my parents, brothers and sisters as a little child. It was very cold, very, very cold in winter, which lasted most of the year, but we knew nothing else. We were born there in the cold and had never been away."

"The schools were usually distant, often miles away. I knew some girls who had to start to school at six in the morning, walking all the way, to reach school by nine. They went through terrible wind and storms a long distance. Often children walked two miles and suffered greatly because of the exposure."

"They tried to dress warmly; three pairs of stockings, very thick, knitted at home, and many clothes were worn, until they were so bundled up they could hardly walk. In those days they had fewer schools and people lived far apart, and so often children had to go through the forests."

"The forests are very beautiful. Now people from England, and other distant places, are finding this out and they come to Finland to spend the short summer months, hunting wild game and fishing and generally enjoying these forests."

"Interesting too is the summer, when the sun never sets at night. We could always see it if we went to a distant hill north of our farm. The sun would keep getting lower and lower until finally for a while it would swing across a small arc, a

dull red, a real sight for those who have not seen it."

"The wonderful forests and valleys and the sun swinging low in the heavens were the two sights up there, but we were so accustomed to our surroundings we thought little of them until later, when we came away."

"Now, a tourist hotel has been built on a rocky location in this far north, and all summer people visit the hotel, as tourists, to see this sight of the sun hanging low in the sky."

"It never got dark at night. When we went to bed it was light as day, but we were so used to it we did not notice it and slept as here."

"When I was nine years of age, my father died. We did not know just what to do, at first. We could not run the farm; my mother and older sisters decided to sell it, and give each member of the family her portion. Then they decided they might as well all come to America together. This we did."

"I have often wished I had used my money to go to school and get a better education, so that I would not have to work so hard now. I have supported myself since I was nine years old, since I arrived in America."

"We all came out to the Middle West and later scattered after my mother died."

"I have two sisters married, living in South Dakota. They went there and later we all took up homesteads. The girls and their husbands had land together and they farmed and improved their places and got on fairly well. The winters are very cold and stormy but, of course, they were used to that in Finland and do not notice it as I do, having lived in better climate."

"They raise stock and have a dairy. I took a homestead and put out most of my money on it, but it proved a bad investment and I got little out of it. The land was not good."

"I have one sister married, and living in Aberdeen, Washington, whom I visited this summer. She is getting along fine. Her husband works there in a lumber and logging concern. They have a little double house, duplex; with each side having five or six rooms. They rent two rooms to a couple for a small rent and the other side to a family. The rents are very low, but she and her husband live comfortably and she has nice things. I sent her some drapery material for her living room."

"I am working as a cook here. I have a room and everything included. I did have a car, a Ford car, which I kept quite a while; I used it so little that recently I decided I'd rather stop the expense of running it and a garage space and have the money in the bank. I advertised it, and a man came right away and gave me two hundred dollars in cash, which was good for a used car, and I put the money in the bank."

"I have a good many friends here. I have a day off every week and can go out at night if I want to. I do all my own sewing. I would not want to go anywhere like Finland again. I like San Francisco and the warmer climate on this coast."

"I have no expenses and I get a good salary, fifty to sixty dollars, so I can save money right along."

FINNISH

"I was born in Pori, in Swedish it is called Bjorneborg. One of my earliest recollections was of hearing my father singing to us children, "The march of the men of Bjorneborg."

"The town of Bjorneborg, or in Finnish, Pori, is situated on the western coast of Finland, and is now an important industrial port. The men of Bjorneborg, in earlier days, under Swedish rule, fought in the Swedish wars across the seas. They were in Germany, in Poland and they were often called upon to protect Finland from Russian invasion.

"My own father had not fought in these wars and neither had my grandfather. But my great-grandfather at the age of fifteen was a full-fledged soldier of Finland and under the direct command of Sweden.

"On the western coast of Finland we had the Swedish-writing poet Runeberg, who wrote Finland's history into a song and poetry. Many of the old songs told of the courage and endurance of the Finnish soldier. He also wrote about the life of the peasants, and of the country, the dense forests, the rivers and lakes, and around them all he wove the mystery and the spirit of the north.

"During the long winter evenings our father would sing and recite the stories of old and ancient times. My two younger sisters and I would sit around him and

listen. In this way we learned the history of Finland. It was natural that many of these songs told of former glories on the battlefield. For centuries, all during Sweden's reign, there had been very little peace for Finland. Hardly a half-century went by without a call to arms of nearly all able-bodied men throughout the country. But hearing of these deeds through the glamour of song and poetry, gave us a feeling of grandeur and glory. This made up our imaginary life and was very different from our everyday existence. Through the power of song we felt the glory that was the spirit of Finland, through the bravery of her soldiers and the many hardships that the country had always endured.

"As a child, I often wondered why the men of Bjorneborg were not now, as in earlier times, called out to battle and to show their valor. The men that I saw were merely going to work each day to the many sawmills and industries along the river. Both men and women were going to the weaving and cotton mills. All these different businesses had now filled the town making it a regular beehive of industry. The only glimpses of the forests that we had, were the timbers floating down the river to Pori, and the rivers and lakes of Finland were there only for the convenience of floating the timber down to the mills. Such was the outlook of the modern "men of Bjorneborg."

"I never tired of watching the giant logs that floated incessantly down from the north. I often thought of the deep, unknown forests that they had left. In many of these woods there were places where man had hardly set foot as yet. These Finnish forests have watched over the country for centuries. They could tell of the ancient Finland, of the time long before any outer influence had made itself felt.

"When my father was a child he had listened to his father telling of and singing about Finland's past. At that time, my father told us they sat by the light of birchwood torches. These would have to be lit and relit every ten minutes. The burning torches would be placed in between the heavy timbers of the walls. Here among the eerie shadows, cast by the burning torches, the children and the older people too, heard and told these colorful and living stories of the country's history.

"It was in this way and in this atmosphere that my father, as a child, had absorbed the national as well as the natural history of Finland, and it was in the same way that he passed it on to us. Hearing of them in this way, the trees, the birds, the wind, the frost, all of nature was made real to us. Real in the sense of feeling that these objects all had a life of their own along with the humans. It brought nature very close to us. We were actually a part of it, along with the water, the rocks,

the sunlight, and darkness.

"The different verses of the "Kalevala" were recited over and over again in our own family groups. We would sit around the open fireplace, our mother at the spinning wheel and our father doing any one of the many chores that he would have at hand through the long winter evenings. The cold and the darkness outside were forgotten. Even the hardships of the day would be out of mind. We were in a complete magic circle. The primitive Finn gave a great deal of power to magic especially to the magic words and incantations. In this way many ancient beliefs and curious superstitions grew up among the people. These early beliefs and customs are given in the Finnish epic, the "Kalevala ". Many of the verses are, in themselves, ancient incantations of magical words. All of our impressions and ideas were gotten by work of mouth. Later on we did much more reading. But our imagination had been fully awakened through actually hearing and talking about these things and it all seemed a part of our own experience.

"We were five in the family. My mother and father, two younger sisters, and myself. Our home was one of the many simple, two-room houses, that were built near the mill for the convenience of the workers. My father worked in one of the saw-mills situated on the river. I went with him to this same mill, when I was ready for my

first job.

" But the "men of Bjorneborg" as I saw them now, were not the same as the ones, that through song and story, I had been led to admire. Prices, shipments were now the only things that had enough importance to be worth while rallying to. They talked of timber, not of the forests. The rivers and lakes meant nothing to them except the convenience of hauling so many thousand logs per season to the ports. To me, those huge, giant logs, floating down to the mills seemed to have more reality than the industries all around us. These giants brought a vital force along with them, as they surged through the waters of the river, on their way to Pori.

" Bjorneborg was quite a city. There were about twenty thousand inhabitants and it was [illegible] for commerce and industry. It was connected with the interior of the country, by a complete water-way. Throughout Finland the rivers and lakes, with the building of locks and canals, are forged together, making regular water highways through the country. These connected the interior with the different ports towards the south and southwest. In the floating of the timber, the exact cost per log in transport can be estimated to the cent. But shipments out of the country are at times held up because of the closing of the ports in the winter, due to the ice.

"The work at the mill grew irksome to me and I soon got out. I then worked along the river, floating the logs and watching that the timber did not jam and block the flow down stream. Working in this way I gradually made my way through central Finland and up to the northern province of Osterbotten. During the two winters that I was up in the northern part of Finland I did forest work, that is, cutting and hauling the timber. It was then that I got into those dense forests of Finland where I had always wanted to go. Here I felt the deep, intense silence of the north. A silence that is almost physical. The air is crystal-clear and unpolluted by any of man's inventions. The snow, an unending whiteness that has smoothed out hills and rocks and made the earth into a level highway. It seemed to me that the impressions from the physical senses were sharply defined in the far north. The air itself is so very clear, there is no atmosphere. Looking at the landscape there is no merging of the distance in a haze, each object stands out sharp and clear. There is a grandeur and beauty about the north that holds one there even through the cold and hardship that one must endure. But I did not have the feeling of futility in the struggle with nature as I have sometimes felt in my struggle for existence in the civilised world.

the hardships of nature leave their mark, but as a compensation I believe that man received from nature that which strengthens and keeps his character and personality from disintegration.

"I learned to know the lakes and rivers through the country. During the summer I worked along the rivers and canal systems down to the coast, changing the routes at different times. The lumber industry is so extensive in Finland that anyone knowing the work and who is strong physically, can nearly always find something to do in this trade the year round. Many times it means roughing it, to the extreme, especially in the far north where the densest forests are being taken out. In Lapland and to the far north the forests are mostly state-owned. The returns on those forest lands are very slow as it takes from two hundred to three hundred years for the timber to get large enough for commercial purposes. It does not pay to cut them any oftener. Forestry is a slow business. The pine needs eighty to a hundred years to become building timber, and one hundred-forty to one hundred-eighty years for profitable sawmill logs.

"I had seen nearly every part of Finland, but when I finally settled down I went back to my home town of Pori, on the western coast. Not long after I got back to Pori we were to hear once more the call to arms of the Finnish soldier. The opportunity came to me and I marched away with the men of Ajornebourg. It was in 1917 and we left to join the Danko, to the south. These troops had

been sent over to Finland to help the "white" army defeat the Bolsheviks. Since the revolution in Russia they wanted Finland to join them under the Soviet rule. And it might easily have been a victory for the "red" army if Germany had not stepped in at the critical time. Finland had at this time turned to Sweden for help, but the Swedes did not offer any assistance. The opportunity that Finland had waited and watched for, through many long and difficult years had at last come to her. She had been a pawn between stronger nations for so long that a national freedom was now her one goal. But this freedom was born through a terrific struggle and with a great loss of her own vital power. It was not only the Russian Bolsheviks, but a great many of Finland's own people who fought in the "red" army. Permanent peace as yet has not lasted long in Finland. I often wonder, if the fate of our country is to struggle, and finally have to surrender to the greatest enemy of all, which to me is industry. Finland is made to order for industrial development and exploitation. The practical business man will not be slow to see these favorable circumstances for profit and take advantage of people and country for gain. Finland is in a somewhat confusing stage. If all of her people are to enjoy a higher standard of living, the country will have to be industrialized. But a people pay dearly for a modern case of living

when these conveniences have to be paid for by the exploitation of a country's resources and also those of the people. So far Finland has kept herself free from sins that has polluted other and older states. This may be because of her being so young in statehood, that her ideals are still intact. Time alone can tell if she really has the makings of the first real republic and if she can keep from making the same mistakes that older nations have made. Finland so far has been a true democracy. Up until 1930 there was but one millionaire in that country. The people who had more in a material way tried to pay back their debt to society in service for the good of all their people and naturally worked for the bettering of conditions in the state. This attitude was taken as a natural expression of real development in human affairs. But human nature is weak and it is only through precedent that it follows the higher ideals. Perhaps the Finnish character is strong enough, and that the country has built its foundations broad enough, for a continued growth in true democracy.

This is a translation from I. Topelius on Finland.

"Without obvious strength and out of the way as this land is, in comparison with richer and larger countries, it asks without pretention but still without hesitation her part in Europe's culture. It is, geographically speaking, a bridge between the east and the west and one of the last outposts towards the ice of the Arctic,

historically it carries within it the only known remnant of a former widely developed, now in most of its branches, dying race, that blossoms out in this offshoot, directing its culture with its individual and different outlook on life.

"It shows in its cultivation of the soil, one of man's most patient and hard earned victories over the forces of nature and in its historical fate has shown what a people can bear up under without losing their identity.

"This land can not be buried in the arctic snows and these people cannot be erased from the many nations of the world, without leaving a desolate place in the north and an empty space in the complex of Europe's culture."

SOCIOLOGICAL

FINNISH

"I was born in the province of Mikkeli, Finland. My childhood home was in a clearing of one of Finland's dense forests, and the only means of communication, to and from the outside world, were the steamers that would come and go on the river. This river was about one-half mile from our house. A mile from where we lived was a larger settlement. Here were about a dozen small farms and also the school and church which we attended.

"My home, a one-story building made of heavy timbers, set in a small garden, with gooseberry and raspberry bushes growing around it like a hedge, looked friendly and inviting. In the winter, before we entered the house, we would stamp and shake the snow from off our overshoes and overcoats in a vestibule that was built out in front of the door, as a protection against the cold winds. The barn was built almost the same as the house. It had windows so that there would be plenty of light when the animals would have to stay inside during the long winter months. Beyond the barnyard were the fields and these continued to the very edge of the forest.

"The forest was a real protection against the cold bitter winds. Almost one-half of Finland is wooded, with deep forests of pine, spruce, birch, and maple.

"Spring would not begin here till April, and by the end of May the snow and ice would be practically gone. But when the long days of summer at last arrived, it was remarkable how soon the grain would ripen. The men and women were out in the fields working during the harvest. The men forging ahead, cutting the grain with the scythe; the women following, binding the cut grain into sheaves. At our home, and the smaller settlement near us, the families existed by the interchange of each others' services. They helped each other. There was very little actual money exchanged in these smaller settlements. The young men would leave and find work among the larger farms during the summer. In this way they would get wages in actual money.

"Finland is a country of small farms. Over fifty percent of the farms are less than fifty acres. Under the government land-reform policy, the large estates of pre-war Finland have been broken up and parcelled out to former tenants. Through scientific farming, the fewer acres that they have now yield more.

"I was not more than fifteen years old when I first started out to find work for the summer. I was able to

find work on a farm some distance from my home and the first season I worked for ten marks per day, (about twenty-five cents) and my room and board. I worked three months and by that time I had about twenty-two dollars and fifty cents in American money. It was big money to me and it would also mean a great deal to my parents when I arrived home in the fall. They would be able to prepare for the long winter months without so much of the ~~s~~uctomary anxiety.

"For the winter, our food and wood supply would have to be stored. In October, our meat for the winter was butchered, salted and cured. We could also depend somewhat on the wild game that was to be found in the woods. The outer windows and doors were set up and the animals had to be cared for the same as the humans. It was like preparing for a seige against some enemy. By December the lakes and rivers would be frozen and the ground covered with deep snow. We were then cut off, more or less, from the outside world. Skiing was the easiest and quickest mode of transportation, and in this way we could always keep in touch with our nearest neighbors. Even with horses and sleds we could take short cuts over the frozen lakes.

"Although Finland is located as far north as Greenland, Alaska, and Siberia, the climate is much more

moderate. With the exception of Norway, Finland has a milder climate than any other country situated so far north. The large forests help a great deal in moderating the climate and protecting the country from the cold winds.

"During the winter, Helsingfors, the capitol and main port, has to be kept open by the use of ice-breakers. Sometimes these are of no help and navigation with the capitol is closed altogether. When this happens the steamers unload their cargoes at Hanko, a port in western Finland that is situated on a peninsula thrust out into the open waters of the Baltic, which is never ice-bound. In the spring with so much ice and snow melting rapidly, there are many violent floods through out the country.

"As spring advances and warmer weather sets in, the farmer has to work overtime to insure a sufficient harvest later on. It is fortunate for him that during the short summer in the north that the light is almost twenty-four hours. The summer weather is sunny and warm, but rarely hot. Everyone is happy to be outdoors. The farmer plowing and sowing. The grain crops are mostly oats, rye and barley. There was not so much wheat raised due to the fact that we were able to get all we needed from Russia for a low price. Then, too,

because of so much uncertainty with the grain crops, weather conditions often destroying them and causing hard times throughout the country, the farmers turned more to dairying and cattle raising as there is plenty of pasture land.

"Now that I had been out on my own the summer before, I knew my way about. After helping my father with the early spring work I was soon on my way. Again I worked in the fields during the summer and being now more experienced I could demand more pay. The second summer that I worked out my wages were twelve marks per day, (about thirty cents), with board and room. There was no eight hour day on the farm. We were up at four in the morning and worked until nine or ten at night. The farmer had only the short summer season in which to make his living for the year and food enough for the animals during the long winter when they have to be fed inside; there is no leisure during the summer on the farm.

"At the end of three months I had earned about twenty-seven dollars and fifty cents. This I could send home, as I had been offered work for the winter with this same farmer. The money that I could earn meant more to them at home than what my labor would be worth if I were there. They didn't need me. With the help from each

member of the family, the necessary chores, expecially during the winter, could easily be taken care of. I was then sixteen years old and I knew that I had definitely left home and that economically I could stand on my own feet.

"My wages for the winter were less than for the summer months. During the winter I recieved about twenty-three cents a day. I stayed on the same farm during the winter and the following summer. But the winter after that, I decided to try my hand at forest work. This was cutting and hauling the trees in the winter and in the spring floating the logs down the river to the mills. The work in the woods was strenuous and accommodations none too good. We went into the woods in mid-winter, as it takes weeks of work to fell the giant trees even for a small clearning. Cabins were built in the woods in which the men eat and sleep. The beds were the hard, wooden benches placed around the walls of the cabin. This was the first time that I had been exposed for any leng'h of time to the bitter cold. We had to haul the logs over a narrow, crooked road, going up over rocks and down steep valleys, until we got to the edge of the river, where they were piled ready to be floated down to the mills when the ice melted in the spring.

"The great forest resources of Finland were first exploited about sixty years ago. Now the government owns over forty per cent of all the woods and they are now under scientific control so that there will be no more wasteful use of them.

"The forest work paid about eight or nine cents an hour at that time. I alternated with the forest work in the winter and spring and farm work during the summers. In this way I would have steady employment during the year. Wages are not high in Finland, but the cost of living is comparatively low. I was able to send money home and I was absolutely independent.

"I was not contented. I wanted to see more of the world. I had never seen a large city and I was then twenty-one years old. I wanted to see something besides the primitive farm and forest life.

"Tammerfors is in the sothwestern part of Finland. It was a twelve hours ride by train from where I was then located. This Tampere district is Finland's leading industrial section. I decided to go there and try my luck. The industrial development in Finland has taken place within the past sixty years, and in recent years the different industries have grown rapidly. The city of Tammerfors has grown along with the industry. The city fulfilled all my expectations. It is a beautiful and clean city not at all what one would expect of

a factory town. The cleanness is due to the use of wood for the furnaces and the use of water power.

"I got work in one of the mechanical pulp mills. This mill stood near a point where the Tammerfors river falls into a lake. This lake is right in the center of the town. There were less than one hundred workers then in the mill. They made roofing-felt, cardboard, and wood-pulp. These factory and mills seemed huge to me. It was all so different to the work I had done before I came here. I had worked outdoors all my life. The wages in the mills were around four marks per hour, about nine cents. This was in 1913, but the wages are higher now. It was here, too, that I got my first idea of the trade unions of Finland. I had been there about a year when I became a member. Finnish labor is well organized. The trade unions were started about fifty years ago.

"During the war Finland had a difficult time. There was a scarcity of food due to a blockade of all the neutral Scandinavian countries. Finland had formerly gotten her supply of wheat from Russia, now this supply was cut off and there was not enough grain in the country for its own subsistence. Even the oats had to be used for the peoples' food.

"This was a critical time for Finland in many

ways. They were watching Russia's entry into the war very closely, wondering if there might not be a chance for freedom. CZar Nicholas was forcing great hardship on the Finns by demanding large loans from them and using the Russian rouble as the measure of exchange. So it was with great anxiety that Finland watched for the opportunity that might set her free. She had been a dependency of Russia for little over a century. But it was the late czar that tried to force the corrupt Russian bureaucracy on them.

"Finally, at the end of 1917, after the Russian revolution, when the czar had been deposed, Finland proclaimed her independence. But it was not until the following year that her independence was established. During this year there was a civil war in Finland.

"The Tampere district, where I was then working, became the central point in the uprising. The workers there were all interested in what was taking place in Russia; the object of economic equality found a quick response and sympathy from them. So it was here that the largest part of the Finnish "red" army was recruited. My own sympathies were naturally with my fellow workers. We were well organized, we were fighting for the equality of our fellow men and we were not thinking of Finland's fight for her independence. For six months, practically all industry was at a stanstill and much

property was destroyed. Many skilled workmen and many of the industrial leaders were murdered. It was a devastating struggle for both sides. It was through the help of German guns and ammunition that the "white" army, with renewed strength, was able to defeat the workers. Finland had won her independence at last.

"The Russian Reds were driven out of Finland and the Finnish workers who had taken part were forced to flee. Many of these went to Russia.

"I could not stay in Tammerfors although I might have gone to some other part of Finland. But after the experience of the past year, there was a reaction; I felt disillusioned and disinterested in my work and all that I wanted was to get far away from it all. Most of my fellow workers had either fallen at the front or had been forced to leave the country. I was able to get by and now my whole ambition was to get over to America. When I left Finland I had no money and the only thing that I could do was to get work as I went along. In two years I was in Goteborg ready to sail for America.

"When I arrived here, times were not so very good; but the wages were far above what they were in Finland. I worked in the building trades, as carpenter. At home carpenters were getting about twenty-three cents per

hour, plumbers around thirty cents, and laborers about seventeen cents per hour. But even with the low wages in Finland the interests of labor are pretty well protected under legislation. They have the eight hour day, free contract, unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, child labor protection, and compulsory mediation of disputes. The social-democratic labor unions here as well as in all of the Scandinavian countries are a strong influence in both political and social affairs.

"In 1917, the ministry of Social affairs was established, which is concerned with labor protection, unemployment relief, labor exchanges, social insurance, poor relief, labor disputes, 'housing', emigration, and social statistics.

"Serious unemployment conditions have occurred during the winters. Owing to the severe climate there has been cessation of shipping, building, and all outdoor work. These conditions have been helped by opening relief work; arranging ordinary work to coincide with periods of seasonal unemployment; by the establishing of labor exchanges and carrying out of government projects.

"The cooperative movement has had a great deal of influence in Finland. The Pellervo Society, founded in 1899, was the beginning of systematic cooperative work

there. This society worked to promote the prosperity of the people by spreading the idea of cooperation. The practical work of actually farming cooperative societies started with the passage of the cooperation Act in 1901. In 1926, there were over five thousand cooperatives registered, with over seven hundred thousand members and included all those in connection with agriculture.

"The cooperative societies have been successful in aiding the farmers both in marketing their products and in purchasing and distributing supplies. This movement has had an uninterrupted growth. It dominates all activities, particularly among the rural population. As merchandising media, the various societies rank foremost and are said to handle one-third of the retail and more than half of the wholesale trade.

"Goods imported through the cooperatives have usually been purchased through Finnish agents of foreign producers, but toward the end of 1928, the Finnish Cooperatives were admitted to membership in the Scandinavian co-operative central office, which has its office in Copenhagen. For the future it is planned to purchase direct from the producers themselves through the agency of this central bureau.

"Consumers Societies: The cooperative idea has been

of great importance to the farmers and city residents through the development of distributing or consumer societies. This group constitutes one of the most important channels for the sale of machinery and supplies to the farmers,and of foodstuffs and small manufacturers in the cities. They are said to handle one-third of the retail trade of Finland, stocking and distributing every kind of article sold through their numberous branch stores that are scattered throughout the country. It is estimated that thirty percent of the grocery sales are made through these societies.

"The commercial societies resemble, in form, the chain stores developed in the United States. In addition to numberous grocery stores, they operate a number of dairies; margarine factories; flour mills; bakeries, drug-stores; cafes and restaurants; meat-shops; non-alcoholic beverage factories and other kinds of commercial establishments.

"Co-operative Unions: Their work consists mainly of carrying on a country-wide program of education in cooperation. The Finnish Cooperative wholesale society has also started manufacturing establishments. The first factories were started in 1914.

"The experience of the cooperatives have been found so satisfactory that a number of large department stores

have recently formed cooperative purchasing offices. Cooperation is an economic and social reform movement and is of considerable importance in eliminating the credit system.

"Although the Finns have been a dependency for seven centuries they are strongly nationalistic people. The Finns were resentful when the Swedes, at the time of their rule, established schools throughout the country, trying to make the Swedish language and culture predominant. The Finns wished to keep their own language and their own cultural background of which they were justly proud. But nevertheless western Europe has always interested and influenced Finland more so than the east. Even to her religion, which is Lutheran.

"I am now married to a Finnish girl. She was born in this country but her parents came here from Finland and settled in one of the New England states. We all speak Finnish. This may prove again that the Finns are a "clannish" race. "

FINNISH

"My home was in Kajana, a small town in the central part of Finland. It lies toward the eastern border of the country, in the province of Ostermack. That part of the land lying to the north is flat country, mostly great plains. As one goes toward the east there are the rising hills and lakes again and the vast forests which spread far beyond the Russian border. Even as far north as these Ostermack plains, there is a profusion of sunshine in the summer. Corn in the south of Finland takes four months to ripen. But here and toward the western coast of Ostermack it only takes eighty-two days. The leaves burst out on the very first day of Spring. Here in the interior of the country the Finnish language is spoken everywhere and the names of the cities and the streets are Finnish.

"Conditions were primitive here compared with other parts of Finland, some of the buildings and equipment dating back over one hundred years. Here may be found one of the oldest types of houses in Finland, a cottage of one or two rooms with possibly a single tiny window. There is a hole through the ceiling or wall to let out the smoke from the chimney-less stove or open fireplace. Everything in the cottage is black by the time the smoke has found its way out through the small hole in the roof. A good deal of the smoke hangs,

like a cloud, in the upper part of the room and with every gust of wind it sweeps downward. The dwellers in these houses often get bad cases of sore eyes. In the wilder and rural parts of Finland, people were still living in these huts.

"There is a strange contrast of the very primitive and the modern in Finnish life. Throughout Finland in out of the way places, may be found the small rough cottages of unpainted wood, surrounded by a small pasture. On these places the people live scantily on what they can raise on the land by casual labor. This class, "back otago sittare," and the "tor pare" are the poorest class in Finland. If their condition gets desperate the commune gives them a little help, and finally, if they are unable, through age or misfortune, to work for themselves, they become paupers and may be boarded in a peasant family at the commune's expense.

"The peasants here have a bad name for drinking and being very quarrelsome. When they get drunk they fight with the sharp knives they always carry. Otherwise they are very intelligent and hard-working people. Along the western coast of Osterbotten, the names of the cities are Swedish and the language is mostly Swedish. Many Finnish poets and writers came from this part of the country. The poet Runeberg came from the coast.

"My home town, Kajana, was then the terminal for the mid-Finnish railroad. Going from there on northward, the journey was made either by river or road travelling. Here are the famous rapids down the Ulea river, from Kajana to Uleaborg, on the western coast. The rapids are one of the attractions that bring the tourists into this part of the country. Very light weight, canoe-like boats, piloted by steersmen of iron nerve and enormous strength carry the passengers down the rapids. In 1819, Alexander I, of Russia took this hazardous trip.

"From early days these rapids have been used to carry boats, loaded with barrels of tar, to the coast. Tar making was one of the principal industries in this part of the country, but it is less now since the ships of iron and steel have taken the place of wooden vessels. The boom year of this trade was in 1865. These tar-boats were manned by five people, the professional steersman and generally two men and two women who take turns rowing. Three voyages down the rapids and three hard return journeys is their work during the short northern summer. The returning tar-boat crew have to pull their boat upstream. On the calmer stretches of river and lake they may be able to run on sail but for the greater part of the trip, which may last three or four weeks, the boat has to be hauled. Usually man and wife share this work. The emancipation of women in Finland is no idle theory, and

in this particular primitive work the women are undeniably equal. This being equal wages for equal work. Independence has been the rule of the Finnish woman's life for nearly a generation. She has known the degradation of absolute servitude but she was lacking in that adaptability and slavish cunning which sometimes makes the oppressed woman so powerful and dangerous. She worked for, and demanded her equality. Even before the critical times of 1899 to 1905, in Finland a great many women were intelligent and self-supporting citizens; to themselves as well able to grasp constitutional problems, to face danger, and to work for their country as any of the men. When they saw the larger opportunity that was adult sufferage, the whole efforts of the women, as well as the men, were directed toward it.

"The Finnish women were among the first to gain their franchise and to a certain extent their freedom. The church and the army are the only two professions closed to them. As yet the general effect of women's work in Finland seems to be about the same as in other countries, only here it has perhaps been intensified. A large per-cent of what might be called "second-class" employment has been opened to them, and they have gladly accepted it. Their advance in "first-class" employment has been slow. They may not have any striking capacity for it or it may hold them back. They have

distinctly raised the standard of secondary or assistant work by their conscientious and thorough fulfillment of it. As yet, they do not come forward as workers of the "first-class" by showing any marked originality, or pioneer enterprise in any sphere of labor (except in architecture.) The same can be said of them in politics. They have done good work on committees, and for the rest, they have mainly confined their efforts toward reforms in the legal condition of women and children. The feminist members of Parliament are divided among the political groups in proportion to the size of these.

"We were a family of eleven children, nine boys and two girls. I was next to the oldest. My parents moved a short distance out of Kajana where we had a larger plot of ground. There was only a small, roughly built house on it and there were barns and stables. We kept two cows, a horse, a few sheep, pigs and chickens. We still attended school in Kajana. As the boys grew up they knew the country, lakes and rivers around and they became proficient guides to the many sportsmen who were coming more and more into this particular part of the country for the fishing. Kajana was beginning to be in the beaten track of the tourists. It has grown from a primitive village, when my parents first came here, into a city of probably two thousand inhabitants. Because of the tourists and hotels, that have naturally sprung up, it has taken on the aspects of city life.

"I was eighteen years old when I had the opportunity of going to live with my aunt and uncle in Helsingfors. I had finished my secondary education and I was to have the chance of continuing my studies at the University. I had already decided on becoming a doctor. My brothers had all taken to the free outdoor life rather than to studies, and they were glad for me, and thought it perfectly fair that I should have this opportunity. Even in Finland, with women's equality and all, the boys get possibly a greater break than the girls in preparing for the future. There is still the feeling that the man will probably take a wife and have her and the children to support. But this plea should be far less powerful in Finland than anywhere else because a Finnish woman does not give up her profession or work when she is married. If there are children, she generally manages after an interval of six months or so, to return to her work. If there are several children under school-age she may remain at home, still earning her own living fully, by the care of them and her household work. The Finnish woman feels that the right to work, meaning a right to her share in any of the world's work, is the key to a woman's emancipation. She wants her right in choosing her place and her work in the more or less important work in the world that only men are now doing. Women have been free to do only one kind of work and that was drudgery.

"It was a two day ride by rail, to the capital and it was my first trip away from home. My uncle with his wife and two children occupied a small flat above a grocery store and restaurant, of which he was proprietor. The whole family, on the ord r of the French tradesmen, worked in the business. My aunt taking full charge of the little cafe, where breakfasts were served and later light lunches were served throughout the day. My uncle's business was running the grocery store. The two children: the son was fourteen years old; the daughter was twelve years old.

"I could also help after school hours. The family life here was one of routine and was very methodical, it was different from my own home life up in the winderness./ My father and mother were both hard-working people, but we lived in such a primitive way, compared to these city people. Our work was not planned, we worked or helped at whatever seemed to be necessary for the moment. And many times it was the unforeseen thing that happened to which we owed our existence. In this way we went along, from day to day, with enough to eat and a place to sleep. Our poor parents probably had many worries on our account, but as time went on one after another of the children would grow up and would be able to do something toward his food and shelter. We were all strong and healthy.

"I was soon at home in my routine work. Everyone having plenty to do we got along very well and we were comparatively

happy. I enjoyed my studies and the life at the University. The students here were organized according to their native provinces. Each student belonging to his or her special union or nation. There were over two thousand men students and seven hundred women students attending at this time.

"All the union or "nations" meetings take place in two very fine students' assembly halls. The chief one, the "Student's House" of Helsingfors, was raised by national subscriptions during several years and completed in 1870. The Swedish students have their separate building, raised at their own expense. Each "nation" would meet weekly under the direction of an elder member and these meetings dealt with administrative and economic matters. These unions dispose of quite large sums of money in loans to scholars, stipendiums. Questions of literary, philosophic or sociological interest were discussed. They do not stop at discussions but have programmes of special work of a very practical order, particularly in ethnology and folk-lore. During the critical times between Russian and Finland, these students unions maintained a widespread system of popular education in the country through the summer holidays, and now when this was not so greatly needed, they turned their energy to the support of the "People's High Schools," or adult schools, and various societies for the distribution of good literature, cheaply. The rivalry between the Swedish

and Finnish students stimulated both to great efforts in this educational work. Competition for once was of real use.

"At this time, especially, there was a seriousness of purpose among the students. There was a unifying principle in the struggle which Finland had just gone through and was still experiencing. Around the University and in Helsingfors the atmosphere was still tense.

"The Finnish students had a fair chance of seeing life. Six years of Russian oppression and underground politics, then the climax of 1905, after which there were two years of the most democratic government that the world had known. This government was carried on under conditions of the greatest uncertainty, anything might come up in the way of hindrances and complications from the Czar. It was in this atmosphere of actually living history that the students and intellectuals of Helsingfors were then living.

"I had finished my studies and had spent two years in hospital work when I married a fellow student of my University days. He was a pharmacist and had been working in Helsingfors for the last two years. At this time we also decided to leave Finland and try our luck in America. Things were uncertain in Europe and times were particularly difficult up there in the north.

"We had friends in Seattle, Washington, so we headed for the western coast of America. There were many Finns in the

north west. We finally settled in a small place called Astoria. Everything here was like being in our native land. The town was made up of Swedes and Finns. The Swedes all lived in one part of the town, the Finns all lived together in another part. In between these two groups was the business section where they all did business together. Even the children in the streets of each section would be using either the Finnish or Swedish language. We lived and worked here, my husband owning a drugstore, until about two years ago. Conditions there, because of the depression, were terrible, as the people had to depend a great deal on work from the outside and when this work was no longer to be had the place was in the most deplorable state.

"We had been in America a short time when we had news that conditions in Finland had again become intensely critical and it was not long after, that the country was experiencing the most tragic of fates that a people are called upon to bear. Civil War was raging through the land. When the sharp, bitter struggle was over I received word that every one of my brothers had lost their lives fighting for the liberty of Finland, in the White Army."